ISBN 0681377917

Waldenbooks

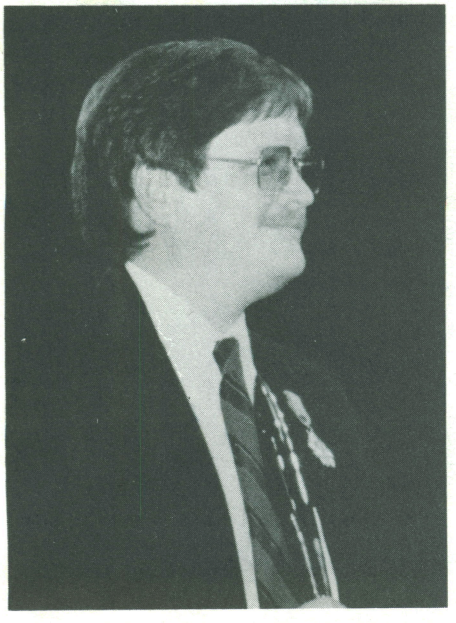
# XIGNALS

Non-Member Price: $1.25

Published bi-monthly and distributed free in Waldenbooks stores to members of the Waldenbooks Otherworlds Club.

*Communications from Waldenbooks Otherworlds Club®*

*Vol. XXII Feb./Mar. 1987*



## High Drama

### An Interview with Orson Scott Card

When *Ender's Game* was awarded both the Nebula and Hugo awards for best novel of 1985, Orson Scott Card must have felt a special sort of satisfaction. The novel was built on a story he dreamt up as a teenager, finally wrote down years later, and sent to *Analog* magazine. It was a sensation with fans, who voted Card the John W. Campbell Award as best new writer of 1978. So in a sense, the awards recognized the maturity of what many SF readers had felt was an extraordinary talent from the very beginning.

Born in 1951, Scott (as his friends call him) attended the University of Utah, where he studied drama. His first professional writings were plays produced for a Utah regional theater. He spent two years as a missionary in Brazil, then returned home to become a professional writer and editor.

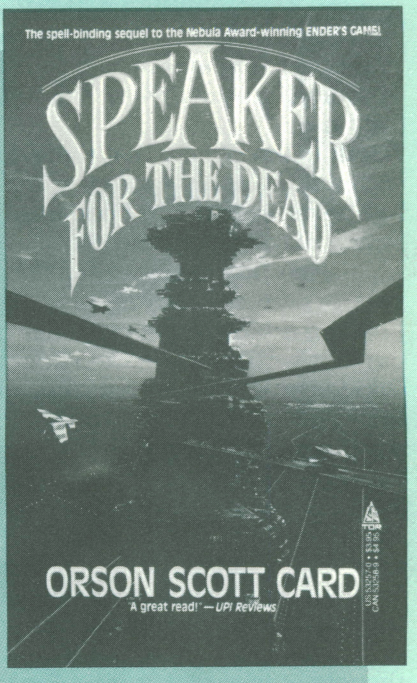
His early work frequently appeared in *Analog*, although he hardly fits the "hard-science" stereotype many readers associate with that magazine. Rather, his work had a strong focus on biology (*A Planet Called Treason*) or humanities (*Songmaster*). Powerful, sometimes shocking, imagery made his stories hard to forget—even when he was still learning his craft. Many of his early stories are collected in *Unaccompanied Sonata*.

The success of *Ender's Game* was only the first sign of what looks like a breakthrough into the top ranks of contemporary SF for Card. *Speaker for the Dead*, just released as a paperback, is a front-runner for the 1986 "best novel" Nebula, and several of his shorter pieces are also well up in the preliminary voting. *Xignals* is also happy to report that he has still more projects on the way—but why don't we go to the interview and let him tell you about them.

**Xignals:** Ben Bova tells of finding the original short version of *Ender's Game* in the *Analog* slush pile. You'd been a professional writer before that, but was that your first science fiction sale?

**Card:** It was my first *fiction* sale. I had written plays before, which had been produced, and I was working professionally as an editor in Salt Lake City. I had never sold a story. I had sent one to *Analog* several years before, and they said, "We like the way you write, but this isn't science fiction." That was in that little crack between the editorship of John W. Campbell and Ben Bova. I didn't even do anything about it again for years. But this story idea, of children practicing for interstellar warfare in a three-dimensional weightless room, had been with me since I was sixteen years old. I finally wrote it down. It still reads, in a way, like a play; it's all either dialogue or stage directions. I hadn't really learned how to do fiction yet, but I gave it a shot. Ben didn't buy it on the first draft; he

*continued on page 2*




## Ender's Return

Orson Scott Card's *Speaker for the Dead* is a return performance by Ender Wiggin, hero of the award-winning novel *Ender's Game*. The events of the former novel have transformed human society, which now occupies a number of worlds. Ender himself has survived well past his normal life expectancy by riding the spaceways at near the speed of light, teaching reverence for intelligent life as a partial compensation for his destruction of an entire alien civilization. But now, the planet Lusitania, settled by Brazilian immigrants, looks as if it will bring that principle to a serious test. The colonists have been prevented from expansion into the rest of the planet by the discovery of the "Piggies," an apparently intelligent race, and scientists have come to study them. The intriguing scientific problem is that nothing in the entire ecology of Lusitania seems to make sense. Not

*continued on page 13*

Copyright 1987, Waldenbooks, Inc.

**CARD** *continued from page 1*
sent it back for revision, and when I had cut it down, cut out a few extra battles and so forth, he bought it.
**Xignals:** A lot of your early fiction was also published in *Analog*, including the stories that grew into your novel *Songmaster*. Did you think of yourself at the time as "an *Analog* writer"?
**Card:** I didn't know that there was such a thing as an *Analog* writer. I had never been a fan; I had been a reader of science fiction, but never exclusively. It was never more than twenty percent of my reading. And I had no notion of the existence of fandom, or that there was such a thing as an *Analog* writer as opposed to an *F&SF* writer or whatever. Actually, I sent the story to *Analog*, never having read the magazine, out of a listing in *Writer's Market*. So I was completely ignorant of magazine science fiction, and I didn't conceive of myself in a particular slot. I found out later that I had been pegged as an *Analog* writer, but I certainly never thought of myself that way. Hard science is completely beyond me; I don't have the background for it. My background is completely literary.
**Xignals:** You hadn't heard the advice that you have to read the magazine to submit?
**Card:** That's right. Now, I had read the *Dangerous Visions* anthologies, and was profoundly influenced by Ursula LeGuin and Harlan Ellison in some ways. In other ways, it was Arthur Clarke whose work most excited me at the time, because I had just barely discovered him. And right then, I had just gotten through binging on everything written by Larry Niven. So that was what was probably in my mind—that kind of clear, straightforward, wonderful storytelling.
**Xignals:** That story made quite an impact on readers. Did you find yourself with a reputation to live up to right from the start?
**Card:** I wasn't aware of it until four or five years later when people at conventions came up saying, "Why don't you write something as good as *Ender's Game* again?" and I would think, "That was my first story, for heaven's sake!" But the story itself was so strong that there was no escaping from it. It wasn't that it was all that well written: it had too many flaws to claim that. But the plain story, regardless of the manner in which it was told, captured people's imaginations. In science fiction, the reader is willing to overlook flaws of art.
**Xignals:** At what point did you decide that the story would work at novel length?
**Card:** It wasn't that I decided it would work; it was that I was working on *Speaker for the Dead*, which I had already sold to Tor. I found that I was spending so much time backtracking, and adding things that were not really in the novelette, that I just had to go back and revise it. So I went to Tom Doherty, the publisher at Tor, and said, "Look, I can't really do a good job of *Speaker for the Dead* unless I write a novel version of *Ender's Game* first, just to set it up properly." I was violating things that had been said in the original story, so I needed to make things consistent.
**Xignals:** What sorts of corrections did you feel were needed?
**Card:** First of all, it is really important for people to realize that *Speaker for the Dead* stands alone; you don't have to read *Ender's Game* to understand it. Not that I don't want people to read it! But the character in the novelette hardly existed. He had no siblings, he came from nowhere, and I needed to establish who his family was. I especially needed to establish a lot more information about the enemies themselves, the "Buggers," who were just sort of stock aliens in the first version of the story. I needed to flesh them out and bring the whole thing to life a lot more than I had been capable of doing in the original short version.
**Xignals:** What was your reason for continuing the novel past the climactic event of the magazine version?
**Card:** It's not just to set up *Speaker*. The story really ends with the climactic final battle, and I just go on, because I'm not content with the idea of the battle to save humanity ending in victory and that's it. I needed to have people realize who it was they had defeated and destroyed,

## Contents


**High Drama** An Interview with Orson Scott Card . . . 1
**Ender's Return** . . . 1
**The Acid Test** The Spice of Life by Peter Heck . . . 3
**Letter Column** . . . 4
**World Fantasy Awards** . . . 4
**The Robotech Novels** Media by Waldo . . . 5
**From Aster's Notebook** . . . 5
**Looking Backward** Vintage Clarke by Peter Heck . . . 6
***Xignals* Profile** Lawrence Watt-Evans . . . 7
**Ace** More Asimov Robots . . . 8
**Avon** Unicorn and Dragon . . . 8
**Bantam/Spectra** Epic Fantasy, Hard SF . . . 8
**Berkley** Classic Moorcock . . . 9
**DAW** Under the Bloody Sun . . . 9
**Del Rey** A New Tale of Pern . . . 10
**Pocket** Facing the Destroyers . . . 10
**Signet** A Realm to Reclaim . . . 11
**Tor** New from Chalker . . . 11
**New in Hardcover** . . . 12
**A Forgotten War** *In the Field of Fire*—Jeanne Van Buren Dann and Jack Dann, Editors (Tor Books) . . . 13
**Contest Winners** Son of Sure-Fire Titles . . . 14
**Reader Quiz** SF Title Search . . . 14
**"Mission Earth"** *Death Quest* . . . 15
**Reader Competition** Gluttons for Pun-ishment . . . 16

and to show the impact of that on Ender himself. So that's what the long final chapter is for—to do a complete moral reversal on the rest of the book.

**Xignals:** How did *Speaker* originate? Did you get curious about how Ender would spend the rest of his life, or did you have a story to tell for which he was the right protagonist?

**Card:** That's exactly it. I had the story in mind of the alien species that seems to be very peaceful but that cruelly puts people to death. It was a vicious image, but it stayed in my mind—the vivisection image that dominates the mystery of the Piggies in *Speaker for the Dead.* At first I thought of my protagonist as a singer for the dead, but I realized that music has become a cliche in my work after *Songmaster.* So I stopped that and just made him speak. Once he wasn't singing any more, I thought that Ender might be the kind of person with the compassion to empathize with someone he's never met, through the pain in his own life. That's when I decided to have Ender be the protagonist—back in 1980. It wasn't until two or three more years, when some more ideas came in, that I felt good enough about it to offer it to a publisher.

**Xignals:** Some of those other ideas evidently came from your stay in Brazil.

**Card:** Yes. I learned to speak Portuguese—fluently, I thought. Since then, some people who speak the language better than I have pointed out flaws in my Portuguese. But they were minor flaws; generally, I was able to bring it off. I could never have used any language other than Portuguese because I don't speak any other that well. I wanted to give a real feeling of a different culture, of a non-American culture. Most science fiction shows people in space as being very much like contemporary Americans, and I didn't want to do that. I wanted to have an intensely religious culture—one where the language and the customs were different.

**Xignals:** You have continued to produce a good amount of short fiction, such as "On the Fringe" and "Hatrack River." Why do you think the short story has stayed alive in SF when it's all but dead in other fields of writing?

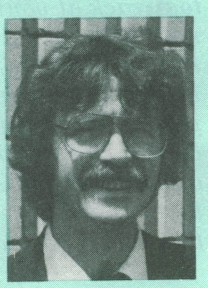
**Card:** It's the readers. Science fiction is unique, and that's why I think it's *the* literary milieu of today. It's read by volunteers—people who are not paid, who don't get tenure, who aren't taking classes. They just care about the ideas and the stories, and they don't read it uncritically; they discuss it, they talk about it. The Hugo and the Nebula are the two most thoughtful awards given in literature today. Science fiction is wide open to new ideas; short stories are where you try them out, try new voices and techniques, where many new writers emerge. The short story would be as alive in any other genre if there was an audience for it, but there isn't in any other field.

**Xignals:** What originally attracted you to science fiction as a form?

**Card:** I first read science fiction when I was a third grader. I'd fin-

*continued on page 12*

# The Acid Test



## The Spice of Life
## by Peter Heck

***X**ignals* reader Chad Record of Parma, MI writes: "For American Literature, we have to pick an author to read four books by and do reports on them. I wanted to pick the first four books of Piers Anthony's "Xanth" trilogy, but my teacher said I couldn't do him. What do you think?"

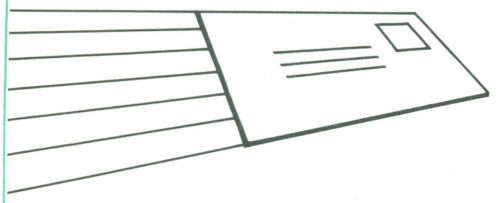
Well, I think this question's harder to answer than it looks—but here goes. Chad's letter doesn't really tell me what his teacher's specific objection to the "Xanth" books was, but I hope it wasn't simply prejudice against SF and fantasy. SF and fantasy can be well or poorly written, original or imitative, thought-provoking or mindless. So can any other sort of writing, including poetry, drama, and diet cookbooks. The point is to look at each piece of writing for what it is, and to judge how well it fulfills its purpose.

So, to return to the question: I think the "Xanth" books are great entertainment, easy to read and enjoy. What's more, they make people want to read, and that's a major accomplishment these days. (In my own days as an English teacher, there were times I'd have been glad to know that my students were reading anything more imaginative than the phone book!) I think that Piers Anthony is doing something worthy of attention and that he is doing it as well as anyone in the field. None of this necessarily means that your American Literature teacher should let you write your paper about him.

Education is supposed to make your world bigger, and the only way it can do that is to give you the biggest possible sample of what the world has to offer. A teacher assumes that you can find entertainment without any help; why spend valuable class time by giving you more of the same? It would be like going to a Mexican restaurant and ordering a cheeseburger and fries. Be honest—would you pick up Hawthorne, Poe, or Twain on your own?

In fact, there is a good deal of fantasy and humor to be found in work by the writers on the standard curriculum—including the three just mentioned. Of course, you'll only find it if you read them. At the same time, you'll find where Anthony has borrowed ideas earlier writers have used—and, on occasion, improved on them in the borrowing. And if you really look carefully at what you've learned, you may end up persuading your teacher that Piers Anthony is a pretty good writer after all.

So go ahead, try the enchiladas and guacamole. You may still like cheeseburgers when you're finished, but at least you'll know what the other flavors on the menu taste like. **x**



## Letter Column

Dear *Xignals*,

I just joined the Otherworlds Club, and I am a devoted fan of Tolkien. Reading the foreword the *The Hobbit*, I noticed several works mentioned that I had never heard of. The titles are as follows: "Farmer Giles of Ham," "Smith of Wooton Manor," and "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil." Do you know where these titles might be available?

Best wishes,
Sam Schaefer
Warner Robins, GA

[Ed. note—*These three short works are all currently available in paperback.* The Tolkien Reader *contains "Tom Bombadil," a collection of short poems; the other two stories are included in a volume,* Smith of Wooton Manor *and* Farmer Giles of Ham. *Both are Ballantine paperbacks, and your local Waldenbooks should have them in stock, or can get them quickly on special order.*—PH]

Dear Peter,

Both your August/September and October/November issues are marked "Vol. XIX"—what gives? Did somebody there cut class the day they taught Roman numerals?

Dubiously,
Pliny III
Brazil, IN

[Ed. note—*Since you've called us out on it, we'll admit that October/November is* really *Vol. XX. (It figured at least one of our readers would have a classical education!) Feel free to write in the correct designation by hand (or whatever appendage you currently use for writing)*—PH.]

* * * * * * * * * * *

Dear *Xignals*,

I usually purchase $25–35 worth of science fiction books at a time from your store, but strangely enough I have yet to receive any discount because the books I've bought weren't on your list of qualified publishers. Is it Murphy's Law that none of my preferred authors' publishers are on your list?

Being able to pick up a free copy of *Xignals* makes the Otherworlds Club membership worth it. Please get the "fantastic benefits" straight in the magazine ads, though.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Joyce Hebert
Orange, TX

[Ed. note—*Thanks for the good words about* Xignals—*now, here's some good news for you. Our discount applies to* all *paperback books in the SF/fantasy rack at your local Waldenbooks, not just to certain publishers. We're in the process of changing the greeting kit for new members to reflect this policy, but it applies to old members as well. We hope you'll take full advantage of this benefit—which I think you'll agree is even more fantastic than our original policy!*—PH.]

* * * * * * * * * * *

Dear Otherworlds Club.

A friend gave me your newsletter, and I think it's great, but I couldn't find anything about how to join the club. Could you clue me in so I can begin getting discounts and the other benefits?

Thanks,
Joe Romane
Rockaway, NY

[Ed. note—*No problem, Joe. Any bookseller at your local Waldenbooks can sign you up as a member of the Otherworlds Club, at no cost or obligation—and you become eligible for the benefits the minute you join.*—PH.]

* * * * * * * * * * *

*Xignals* welcomes communications from all our readers; letters should be addressed to *Xignals Letter Column, P.O. Box 10218, Stamford, CT 06904.* We reserve the right to edit and condense any letters printed in *Xignals.* While we can't promise a reply to everything, all letters will be read and your opinions taken seriously.x

### Attention *Xignals* Subscribers

If you have changed your address or have a question about your subscription, please write to: Waldenbooks, Xignals, P.O. Box 4225, Huntington Station, NY 11746. IMPORTANT: When notifying us of an address change, be sure to include *both* your new address and your previous address as it appears on the mailing label.x

## World Fantasy Awards

Providence, RI, the long-time home of H.P. Lovecraft, played host to the 1986 World Fantasy Convention over last Halloween weekend. Some 750 members, including at least 50 from outside the U.S., were on hand for the festivities, which culminated in the World Fantasy Awards banquet on Sunday afternoon. Here's a complete list of the winners:

* * * * * * * * * * *

Best Novel: Dan Simmons, *Song of Kali*
Best Novella: T.E.D. Klein, "Nadelman's God"
Best Short Story: James P. Blaylock, "Paper Dragons"
Best Anthology or Collection: Robin McKinley, *Imaginary Lands*
Best Artist (tie): Thomas Canty/Jeff Jones
Special Award—Pro: Pat LoBrutto (Doubleday)
Special Award—Non-Pro: Douglas E. Winter
Special Convention Award: Donald A. Wollheim (DAW Books)
Life Achievement: Avram Davidsonx


### Amaze a Friend with Data on the Waldenbooks Otherworlds Club!

**Reveal these fantastic benefits:**

★ All Otherworlds Club members receive the following discount on purchases of any **paperback** books displayed in our science fiction/fantasy section:

**10% off purchases totaling $5.00–$14.99**

**15% off purchases totaling $15.00 or more**

★ Additional savings on selected **hardcovers.***

★ Copies of *Xignals*, the Club's bi-monthly newsletter—free from any Waldenbooks store.

That's a formula for astounding savings... So, communicate the secret to a fellow fan!

**Special hardcover offers featured in this issue are good through March 31.*

**$2.95 each**

# The Robotech Novels

## Media by Waldo

The popularity of Japanese animation—best exemplified in *Robotech*—is obvious to anyone who has spent more than a few minutes in a toy store, where the transforming robots inspired by the series are still hot stuff. Comics, graphic novels, even bedsheets and lunch boxes are evidence that *Robotech* has captured the imagination of young fans. Go to the video room at a con, and you'll discover that the appeal goes well beyond the pre-teen set. Many fans consider Japanese animation the greatest contribution to the field since the glory days of the Disney studios. And a feature movie is scheduled for fall release—sure to spread the news even farther.

Now, Del Rey brings the *Robotech* saga to SF readers across the country, in a four-volume novelization (by Jack McKinney) of "First Generation"—the tale of the abandoned alien battle fortress that is the only hope of an Earth poised on the brink of a global civil war, and threatened by alien invaders with weapons far beyond Terran technology. The first installment, *Genesis*, tells of the discovery of the huge fortress, and of Captain Gloval's assumption of its command. Then the aliens attacked—and even the huge SDF-1 might not be enough to save Earth!

*Battle Cry* is the second volume, and Gloval's problems are compounded as the powerful Zentraedi arrive to claim the vessel he commands. *Homecoming* continues the saga; after far-ranging battles, the human crew of the SDF-1 are forced to bring their damaged vessel home to Earth, with the fleets of the aliens in the way. Perhaps they can fight one final battle; but can they survive it? Finally, in *Battlehymn*, Gloval defies orders to bring his massive fortress back into the fight, once again to challenge the invading aliens.

McKinney brings the energy and color of the animated version to his novels, and the plot becomes clearer than ever before. The characters have always been a special strength of Japanese animation, and the author makes the most of the chance to flesh them out. Best of all is the gigantic scale of the action, a pretty close modern equivalent of "Doc" Smith's super science adventures. Many fans think the series combines the classic SF "sense of wonder" with the most realistic characterization in years.

Insiders have long felt that a look at media SF is the quickest way to figure out what the future of print SF is going to be. The *Robotech* novels arrive at Waldenbooks February 15; here's your chance to see what all the excitement is about! **$2.95 eachx**

# From Aster's Notebook

Biologists have managed to transplant a gene from fireflies into tobacco plants, producing tobacco leaves that glow in the dark. (Honest—I read it in *The New York Times*!) Unfortunately, they seem to have overlooked the most crucial question of all—if you smoke the stuff, do *you* glow in the dark?

* * * * * * * * * * *

Princeton University scientists recently attained the highest temperature yet recorded in a laboratory —over 200 million degrees Celsius. Of course, they kept the humidity low enough so that nobody really minded it.

* * * * * * * * * * *

**More Advice for Time-travelers**

It's not very clever to stalk
A dinosaur out for a walk.
If the beast gives a flail
Of his forty-foot tail,
They'll dig up *your* fossil in chalk!

* * * * * * * * * * *

Speaking of dinosaurs, what kind of noise did they make? Studies of their fossilized skulls suggest that most of them had poorly-developed ears and were probably mute; the birds and insects of the period probably made more use of sound for communication than even the largest saurians. So the loudest sound in the Late Cretaceous may not have been a mighty "GRONK" but a cheery "chirp"!

* * * * * * * * * * *

Nineteen eighty-seven already? For the historically-minded, I'll note that 50 years ago, John W. Campbell became editor of *Astounding*; 150 years ago, Edgar Allen Poe published *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*, the first American SF novel; and (just for the record) 500 years ago, Geoffrey Chaucer was starting to write the "Canterbury Tales."**x**

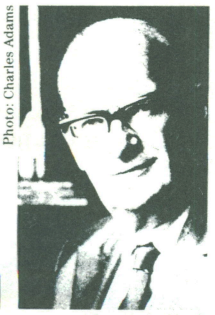


Photo: Charles Adams

# Looking Backward

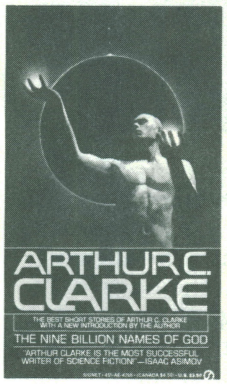
## Vintage Clarke by Peter Heck

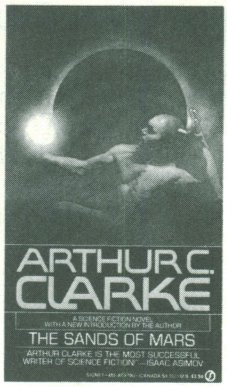
The British division of the Woolworth's stores was where young Arthur C. Clarke first laid eyes on a science fiction magazine. It was the third issue (March 1930) of *Astounding*, featuring Ray Cummings' space opera, *Brigands of the Moon* (with a cover by Wesso), and it was sufficient to convert the 12-year-old Clarke into a fan.

It wasn't long before Clarke was widely known (usually by his nickname, "Ego") in British fan circles. His imagination found its range, first in school newspapers, then in fan publications. His entry into the professional ranks might have come earlier had he been able to afford college. But despite his literary and scientific precocity, 1936 to 1941 saw him holding a government job; he spent the war years in the RAF and took part in the earliest tests of ground control radar. After the war, he was finally able to devote time to writing; his first story, "Loophole," appeared in 1946—in *Astounding*, of course.

It was obvious that a new star had arrived. Heinlein, Asimov, and the other giants of the Golden Age had a head start, but Clarke rapidly made up the lost ground—first by a series of remarkably varied magazine stories (then, as now, the quickest way to make an impact on fandom), then by an equally impressive series of novels. In between, he also proposed the use of orbiting communications relays, at a time when space flight seemed a wild improbability. By 1956, he was chosen as guest of honor at the World Science Fiction Convention in New York. Thirty years later, he was recognized as a Grandmaster by the Science Fiction Writers of America—one of only seven writers so honored.

Many of Clarke's early stories appear in *The Nine Billion Names of God*, a collection of his own favorites. The title piece, the story of a computer firm hired as a consultant by a Himalayan monastery looking to make its rituals more effective, is high on many fans' "all-time favorites" list. The combination of high tech and mystical forces is one of Clarke's trademarks—and it would be hard to top his performance in this masterpiece. "The Star," another all-time Clarke favorite, also appears in this collection.

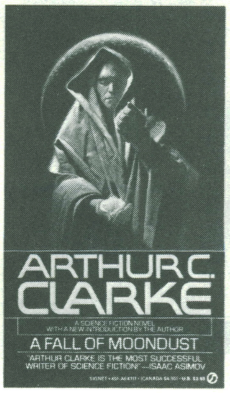


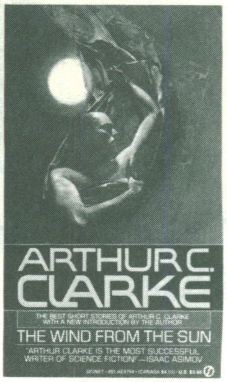




One of Clarke's earliest novels is *The Sands of Mars* (originally published in 1951 by Gnome Press), which takes as its protagonist a famous science fiction writer who gets sent to Mars (already the site of a human colony) to write up his impressions. When he decides to stay, it precipitates a crisis; Terran officials are ready to close down the colony as a money-loser. The hero is in the position of writing in defense of the very existence of his new-found home; then he begins to discover some of the *real* secrets of his adopted planet!

Clarke's reputation in SF circles grew with such efforts as *The City and the Stars* and *Childhood's End*, but his 1961 novel *A Fall of Moondust* received wider than usual attention when it was selected as a *Reader's Digest* condensed book. The plot was simple: a busload of Lunar tourists is trapped by an accident; the suspense arises in the attempts first to locate, then to free, them. The tone is as cool and factual as a news story—an effect Clarke can pull off more convincingly than anyone else in the field.

*The Wind from the Sun* is a later collection of Clarke's short fiction, which by now was appearing in magazines far more prestigious than the pulps from which he'd gotten his inspiration. The price of admission is more than repaid by the fine title




story of spacecraft powered by the solar wind; ex-Boy Scouts may recall its original publication in *Boy's Life* under the title, "Sunjammer." Also in this volume is "A Meeting with Medusa," which took the 1972 Nebula Award for Best Novella; an account of life forms in the atmosphere of Jupiter, it continued Clarke's exploration of organisms adapted to a completely non-terrestrial environment.

All four of these Clarke classics have been scheduled for February reissue by Signet, and the author has written new introductions for each. Signet intends to bring out all the vintage Clarke fiction to which it has the rights, at the rate of one book a month after this initial four-volume offering. New readers will be astounded at Clarke's imaginative versatility; long-time fans will rejoice at having new introductions to the classic stories. And all of us should give thanks that the local Woolworth store was carrying *Astounding* when young Arthur arrived. If they'd been displaying *True Detective*, we might still be waiting for clear phone lines to Sri Lanka...x

## Xignals Profile

### Lawrence Watt-Evans

Thanks to a chronological loophole, Lawrence Watt-Evans has two birthdays. The fourth of six children, he arrived in the world shortly after midnight on July 26, 1954, in Arlington, Massachusetts. But daylight saving time was in effect, and by sun time he arrived shortly *before* midnight on the 25th—perhaps a bit confusing, but decidely convenient when planning parties and the like.

More significantly than the ambiguity of his birthdate is the fact that both his parents were avid science fiction readers, with a large collection the kids were encouraged to browse in. His particular focus was a nearly complete run of *F&SF*, which he began to devour shortly after he learned to read; at age 7, he was already familiar with Heinlein and Bradbury.

He had also discovered a degree of writing ability; a second-grade teacher had singled out a story ("about two birds who fall in love," he recalls) as well-written. He knew that a full-scale novel was beyond his ability, but a string of of short-short stories came from his young imagination. None were intended for anything but his own enjoyment—he didn't even tell them to friends, and destroyed the bulk of them at age 17.

His first published writing was nonfiction: first a series of columns for a short-lived local right wing newspaper ("I hope nobody still has copies," he told us), then a mimeographed parody of the high school newspaper—including takeoffs on such SF/fantasy characters as Conan. An older friend told him the stories were good enough that he ought to try writing fiction seriously. But first, there was college ahead—Princeton, which both his father and his grandfather had attended.

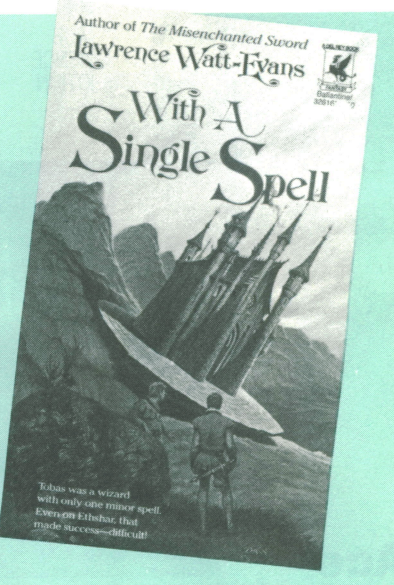
Watt-Evans successfully completed his freshman year, then attempted to spend the first semester of his sophomore year in non-stop partying. The results were predictable; the university asked him to spend some time growing up before resuming his studies. Reluctant to spend the interval under the eyes of his disappointed parents, he moved to Pittsburgh, where his future wife, Gail, was attending college. Now he decided to see if he could make it as a professional writer and dedicated a year to the attempt. The results were not encouraging: a single sale, for the grand sum of $10. He returned to Princeton, where he lasted one more year before deciding that, whatever he wanted to do with his life, he didn't need a college education to do it.

Still, his writing was attracting no buyers, although he'd managed to complete one novel. Gail's job with IBM provided some security, but she wasn't interested in supporting an amateur SF writer for the rest of her life. He decided to set up a mail-order comic book dealership, which he eventually built up to the point of an income of about $15 a week—again, hardly a living wage. The shortage of customers left him a surplus of time, and he decided to give writing one last shot. He completed a second novel and sent both off to Del Rey. The first came back, rejected; "I figured the second would follow shortly," he admits. He was wrong; on May 10, 1978, Del Rey bought *The Lure of the Basilisk*.

That ended the comic dealership, although he kept his collection (now about 12,000 issues) and for some time contributed a column, "Ray Guns, Elves, and Skin Tight Suits," to *The Comic Buyer's Guide*. His special interest was pre-Code horror comics, on which he hopes eventually to publish a book. But his fiction had finally found its audience, and he soon added three more volumes to the adventures of Garth the Overman, which *Basilisk* had begun. He also revised and sold his first novel, now known as *The Cyborg and the Sorcerors*.

It was his sixth Del Rey novel that put him over the top with readers. *The Misenchanted Sword* takes us to the magical world of Ethshar, with realistic comic plotting and carefully imagined characters. His latest offering, *With a Single Spell*, returns to that setting, although with different characters. The protagonist is an apprentice magician whose master's death leaves him with only one spell on which to build a career.

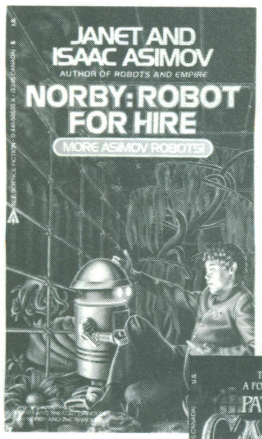
*continued on page 11*



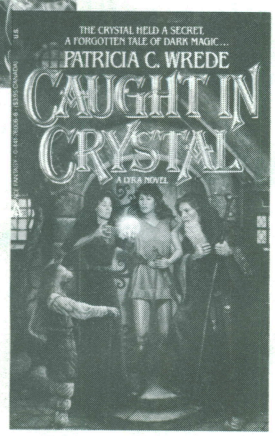

## Return to Ethshar

*With a Single Spell* is Lawrence Watt-Evans' return to Ethshar, the world of his popular fantasy, *The Misenchanted Sword*. The hero of this one is Tobas, who became apprenticed to a wizard after his father was lost at sea—a lucky turn of events for an orphan without other prospects. But Tobas had hardly begun on his apprenticeship when his master died, after teaching him only the elementary fire-starting spell. The wizard's book of spells was destroyed, along with his hut and all its other contents, when Tobas attempted to defeat its magic seals. Now he was left with a single spell, too old to find another to take him on as apprentice. Still, if he could make his way across the sea to Old Ethshar, there were dragons to be slain, quests to be undertaken, magical prizes to be won. Perhaps it would be difficult for a wizard whose skills were confined to starting fires, but Tobas had no other hope. He began looking for a rowboat...(On sale February 15.) **$3.50x**

# XIGNALS NEW & CURRENT




ACE
SCIENCE
FICTION




## Ace

### More Asimov Robots

Janet and Isaac Asimov team up for a delightful new science fiction tale in *Norby: Robot for Hire.* Norby's not just an ordinary robot—he's one of the wildest secret agents ever to roam the galaxy. Along with Space Command Cadet Jeff Wells, his kid brother Fargo, their shape-changing pet Oola, and Zargl the dragon, Norby is ready to tackle any assignment Admiral Yobo can throw at him. He may be old-fashioned and a bit battered, but robots as brave as Norby don't come along every day. Besides, he does have a few super-powers up his metallic sleeves. This adventure finds them blasting off for the planet Izz to help a mad queen and an unlucky king find a missing princess. Ranged against the heroes are an evil Court Scientist and the enigmatic singing Slithers of Melodia. One more small problem: the princess has been transformed into a tree. No sooner have the gallant heroes solved this adventure than they're off on another quest—this time to the Dragon Planet Jayma, where alien invaders are abducting the residents for displays in a cosmic zoo. This one's all the proof you need that two heads are better than one—especially when both the heads are Asimovs! **$2.95**

* * * * * * * * * * *

*Caught in Crystal* is the latest in Patricia Wrede's popular "Lyra" series. Kayl is a widowed innkeeper who wants nothing more than a quiet life, safe from the notice of the oppressive local rulers. But, when she finds a sorceress and a wizard turning up on her doorstep, her troubles have begun in earnest. Then the memories begin, courtesy of the Sisterhood of Stars—memories of the Twisted Tower, deep in the Windhome Mountains. Kayl had hoped that leaving the Sisterhood would mean she would never again have to lay eyes on the Tower, or take up the sword that lies buried beneath the hearthstones, cold and unused. But something evil has begun to leak into the wild country surrounding the Tower, and her visitors have come to call her to action. Kayl may have no choice but to dig up her sword and take arms against the evil of the Tower. (On sale February 10.) **$2.95x**

AVON

## Avon

### Unicorn and Dragon

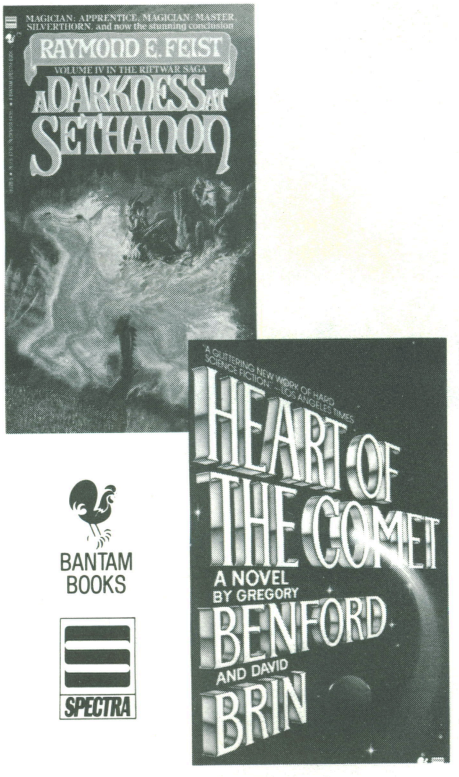
Lynn Abbey takes us to 11th-century England—a time of anarchy and strife—in *Unicorn and Dragon.* Two sisters are at the focus of the novel: Alison is an impulsive blonde who wishes a life of romance and adventure; dark-haired Wildecent is apparently without her sister's magical talents and relies on cunning and intrigue. Hafwynder Manor, the small castle they call home, is for now an island of safety in the upheaval that engulfs all of England. But that may last only until someone decides it is worth the effort to wrest it away from Lord Godfrey. Then a mysterious young man arrives, a stranger too badly wounded by attacking wolves to explain his origins or his plans, and the castle is thrown into almost as much chaos as the world outside. The two sisters each find themselves drawn to the handsome stranger—both allies and rivals at the same time. But unless Wildecent can discover her own magical powers and add them to Alison's, Hafwynder Manor will be all be defenseless against the human wolves running rampant throughout the land. Lynn Abbey's talents are well known to readers of the "Thieves' World" series of which she is a co-creator. Now, she has staked out her own time and place for a stirring historical fantasy. The talents of Robert Gould, one of the most striking of today's fantasy illustrators, are also evident—not only on the cover, but in eight glorious black-and-white drawings. Fantasy in the grand manner; Abbey's fans will hope this is only the beginning of a series of solo projects. **$5.95x**

## Bantam/Spectra

### Epic Fantasy, Hard SF

*A Darkness at Sethanon* is the fourth and concluding volume of Raymond E. Feist's "Riftwar Saga." Tomas, whose humanity is only partly eclipsed by his status as a Dragon Lord, joins forces with the master magician Pug, called from a mysterious sojourn to lead the battle against the forces of Macros the Black. Other forces are also moving; Prince Arutha and his companions, who dealt the powers of ancient evil a crippling

# XIGNALS NEW & CURRENT




BANTAM BOOKS

SPECTRA

blow, return to face the renewed powers of darkness. Their paths bring them to the ruined city of Sethanon, on the south edge of the great Dimwood. The battle will not be easy, for the fate of two worlds hangs on its outcome. Pug brings the lost arts he has studied with the Elder Elves in the far North, Tomas brings the ancient power of the Valheru, and Prince Arutha the hardened veterans of his campaign. But, even working as one, will they be enough to stem the tide of Chaos? Feist's "Riftwar Saga" has been compared to Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" for imaginative scope and power. If you're looking for high fantasy in the great tradition, here's one of the best. **$3.95**

* * * * * * * * * * *

*Heart of the Comet* combines the award-winning talents of Gregory Benford and David Brin, for one of the most effective hard SF epics in memory. A colony of scientists rides Halley's Comet on its long outward journey into night and cold; from that premise, the authors build a plot as strong in human drama as in scientific speculation. At first, the elements are the main enemy; but when strange life forms are discovered in the frozen depths of the comet, the colony faces a crisis. Dare they return to inhabited worlds, and run the risk of infecting the entire human race? Should they alter their course, setting down on a planet without human occupants? Rival political factions on the comet complicate the decision; one group wishes to abandon civilization to become one with their new home, while another seeks vengeance on the world that has betrayed and abandoned them. Meanwhile, still others search for a scientific solution to their difficulties. Benford and Brin combine a unique setting and strong characters to generate a story that constantly surprises the reader. (On sale February 10.) **$4.50x**

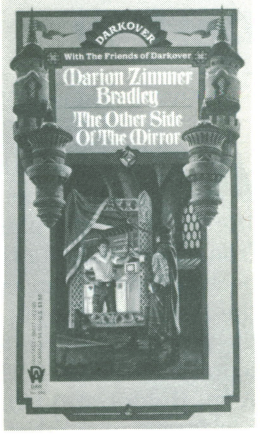
SCIENCE FICTION

**Berkley**

## Classic Moorcock

*The Eternal Champion* is Michael Moorcock's saga of a man called by destiny. John Daker, an ordinary man of our time, hears the voices calling him across the ages—the tortured voices of humanity in need of a hero. They know him by many names: Erekose, Corum, Elric, Hawkmoon. But, there is only one Eternal Champion, reborn again and again in response to the world's needs. Wherever the powers of evil and chaos are found, a champion will arise to confront them. Now, John Daker has been called to the struggle. His destination is the land of Necranal, far distant in time, where the prayers of King Rigenos have called him. Yet there are those who do not believe in the hero that has come to save humanity from the dreaded Eldren, who consider him a fraud even as his armies set forth to do battle. Daker gradually begins to question his own mission; are death and destruction the only means by which humanity can be saved? Moorcock's rich symbolism and moral ambiguities are as evocative as ever in this classic fantasy. The cover is by Robert Gould, whose previous credits include fine covers for Moorcock's "Elric" novels. **$2.95x**

DAW SCIENCE FICTION




**DAW**

## Under the Bloody Sun

*The Other Side of the Mirror* is Marion Zimmer Bradley's look at the years when contact between Earth and its long-lost colony, Darkover, was first reestablished. A world ruled by familes who have developed unique mental powers (known as *laran*), and wield them for good or ill, Darkover has lost much of the high technology of its discoverers. Instead, the people of its Seven Domains have developed institutions and traditions adapted to the harsh realities of the planet they now call home. With help from the Friends of Darkover, MZB explores the turbulent age when Terran technology and Darkover power are first tested against one

*continued on page 10*

# XIGNALS NEW & CURRENT

**DAW** *continued from page 9*
another, under the light of the red star they call the Bloody Sun. "Everything But Freedom," "Oathbreaker," and "Bride Price," three long tales by MZB herself, make the anthology a must-read volume for all her fans. An especially welcome feature of this volume is a new master plan for Darkover, a timeline and chronology of her beloved world, as well as a brief history of the ages of Darkover. Now the many admirers of her work can place each novel in its proper relation to the larger tale of Darkovan history—a tale we trust will continue to grow for many volumes to come. **$3.50x**

## Del Rey

### A New Tale of Pern

Anne McCaffrey's latest is *Nerilka's Story*, set in the same era as *Moreta*. A deadly plague, brought from the South Continent by unsuspecting traders, has swept across the Holds and Weyrs of Pern—just as the planet prepares to combat the scourge of Thread. The people of Pern, Holder and Dragonrider alike, join forces to combat the epidemic—all except Nerilka's father, Lord of Fort Hold, who retreats behind closed doors and refuses to share his hoarded medicine and supplies with his neighbors. Nerilka cannot support her father in his shameful action. Determined to aid her fellow Pernese, she leaves the hold to bring aid and comfort to her people—going wherever her talents can be of most help. She finds her way, eventually, to Ruatha Hold, where Lord Alessan works to find a way to stem the spread of the disease. What she finds there will change the course of her life forever. Illustrated by Edwin Herder—a special treat for Pern fans. **$3.95**

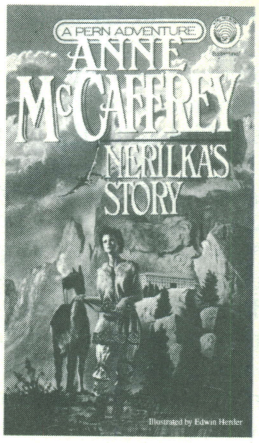
* * * * * * * * * * *

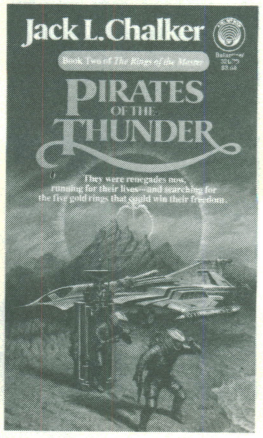
*The Misplaced Legion* begins a new series from Harry Turtledove, "The Videssos Cycle." It all begins in ancient Gaul, as Marcus Scaurus, a Roman tribune, readies himself for a duel to the death with the Celtic chieftain Viridovix. Each holds, unknown to the other, a sword enchanted by the magic of the Druids. Looking on are three cohorts of Caesar's legionary troops. But when the swords touch, a dome of golden light leaps up and surrounds Marcus, Viridovix, and the watching soldiers. Suddenly they find themselves under a strange night sky with unfamiliar constellations. They are in Videssos, a land where neither Latin nor Celtic is spoken, where magic and dark sorcery will test their courage as no man of ancient Earth has ever been tested. A strong new fantasy series by an upcoming star. **$2.95**

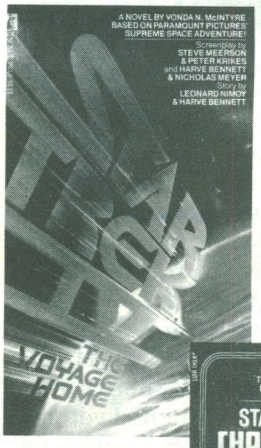
* * * * * * * * * * *

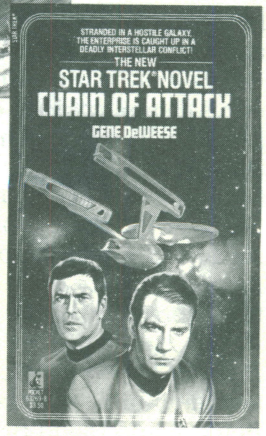
Jack L. Chalker's *Pirates of the Thunder* is the second volume of his new series, "The Rings of the Master," which began with *Lords of the Middle Dark*. Lazlo Chen is in search of the five gold rings that can free the human race from the control of Master System. Hawks, who refuses to aid him, has been sentenced to rot in the deadly prisons of Melchior. Chen plans to let him escape, then follow him to the rings; but he underestimates his adversary. Hawks' escape is easy enough, with the aid of a small group of fellow prisoners. But he senses that Chen is tracking him—and that another, even greater power is also in pursuit. Determined to gain the rings for himself, he seeks safety for himself and his band of renegades in the only place possible—right in the middle of pirate territory. *Lords of the Middle Dark* was a bestseller, and this one's a good bet to follow suit! (On sale February 15.) **$3.50x**

DEL REY
BALLANTINE






POCKET SCIENCE FICTION

## Pocket

### Facing the Destroyers

Gene DeWeese's *Chain of Attack* is the latest in the best-selling series of "Star Trek" novels, and a worthy addition to its predecessors.

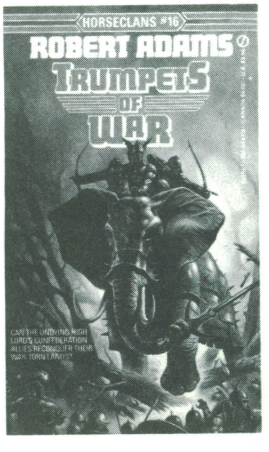
# XIGNALS NEW & CURRENT

The *Enterprise* is busy mapping a series of gravitational anomalies—only to find itself hurled uncounted light years across space to a distant galaxy. Returning home is next to impossible, even with all the power and ingenuity of the *Enterprise* and her valiant crew. Captain Kirk begins a search of nearby star systems, refusing to abandon hope even in the face of permanent exile from the Federation. The search reveals dozens of lifeless worlds, seared by the power of hostile beings known to their victims only as the Destroyers. That information is disturbing enough; then they learn that the surviving peoples of the new galaxy have mistaken the *Enterprise* for a Destroyer ship. Unless Kirk and his crew can prove themselves, they face immediate destruction! The alternative is to seek and destroy the Destroyers themselves. **$3.50x**

* * * * * * * * * *

**CORRECTION**

Sharp-eyed readers will have noticed that *Xignals* XXI illustrated the wrong cover for Vonda N. McIntyre's *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*. The correct cover appears at left. Our apologies to the author, the illustrator, and any of our readers to whom the mix-up may have caused inconvenience.**x**

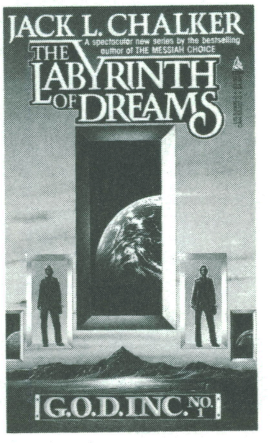



SIGNET

## Signet

### A Realm to Reclaim

Robert Adams' *Trumpets of War*, 16th in his "Horseclans" series, pits Milo Morai and his Confederation Army against the evil of the High King Zastros and his witch queen. The mad king was no match for Milo's troops. But Zastros' frenzied campaign devastated his own lands, leaving the once-rich kingdom of Southern Ehleenoee a near wilderness. Bandits, killers, and renegade warriors roam at will, slaughtering all who dare resist them, and mocking Milo's pledge to restore peace to the realm. Now, Milo must unite his former enemies under Confederation law, and bring the conquest of their land to a peaceful conclusion. The restoration of order will be hard enough; but Milo must also cope with traitors who wait for their chance to bring down their conqueror. Can Milo bring peace to the war-torn land, or will the forces of chaos and anarchy prevail against the Horseclans? Adams' loyal fans will find the answer in *Trumpets of War*. **$3.50x**




TOR

## Tor

### New from Chalker

Jack L. Chalker's newest series is "G.O.D. Inc."—and the first installment is *The Labyrinth of Dreams*. Sam (with his wife Brandy) runs a detective agency—and he's currently flat broke. So when he's offered a job tracing Whitlock, a banker who's skipped town with a couple of million bucks, he isn't inclined to hesitate. So what if his new clients are mobsters? Laundered money will pay the bills as well as anyone else's. Sam and Brandy trace the missing man to a mansion in a tiny Oregon town—and to G.O.D. Inc. The guy they're after is there, all right—except for a few problems. First of all, there are *three* of him (the prints match)—one female. And one of the triplets is dead. Sam and Brandy are the natural suspects, or so the local authorities think. But a murder rap isn't the worst thing they've walked into. It turns out that G.O.D. Inc. is behind a plot to take over all of organized crime—not just the trifling two million in drug money they'd been after, but the whole ball of wax. What's even worse is that they aren't in Oregon any more . . . they're at the entrance to the Labyrinth of Dreams. First in a new Chalker series that promises to be his most audacious yet! (On sale February.) **$3.50x**

## Reader Quiz Answers

Myth Adventures
Mists of Avalon
Blue Adept
Ogre Ogre
Cocoon
Star Trek
I Inside
One Tree
Hit or Myth
Unicorns
Sword of Shannara
Robots of Dawn
Wizards
Face of Chaos
Orion
Corona
Dr. Who
Alien Debt
Dayworld
Slipt
Forever War
Friday
Star Wars
Hobbit
Titan
Conan
Nova
Vulcan

**PROFILE** *continued from page 7*

Asked to choose a favorite among his many books, Watt-Evans cites *Shining Steel*, the first of a loosely-connected series (from Avon) set against a consistent future history. "It's sort of a homage to Van Vogt and pulp science fiction," he says. *The Cyborg and the Sorcerors* also remains a strong favorite, and he is enthusiastic about another forthcoming project: "a hardboiled detective story set in the 24th century." But it's probably premature to choose favorites. Watt-Evans has a long career ahead of him, and more than enough ideas to whet any fan's appetite.**x**

**CARD** *continued from page 3*
ished everything in the Santa Clara public library, at least everything that was there for children and that looked at all interesting to me. So I snuck past the circulation desk over into the grown-up section. I was baffled by a lot of things that I saw, but I had seen a few of the normal science fiction ideas in reading children's fiction, so I gravitated toward books with a little spaceship on the back. And I found a few stories that just captured me. I clearly remember "Call Me Joe," by Poul Anderson, though at the time I didn't notice his name or even remember the title. I just remembered the story and then, years later, realized that it was the one I had read. I didn't really follow up on it until I was in seventh grade. I read everything by Heinlein at that time, and everything by Andre Norton that I could get my hands on in the junior high school library. Every now and then, in bursts, I would go into science fiction and avidly read one or two writers' work, and then go back and read plenty of other things that had nothing to do with science fiction. So I kept rediscovering science fiction all through my teens.

**Xignals:** How much has your work kept the dramatic orientation that was so evident in your first story?

**Card:** My dialogue has always been my strongest point, and I hope it always will be. Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, James Goldwin's *Lion in Winter*, and Robert Bolt's *Man for All Seasons* were probably the most important pieces of writing that I read during the years when I started my own writing, and so echoes of their language and style kept creeping into my own work. Sometimes, in the beginning, it was deliberate. Later I would have to fight to keep Albee-esque things from creeping in inadvertently. I don't like sounding like somebody else, but they taught me the kind of indirection and startlement that is possible in dialogue—how much dialogue can carry.

**Xignals:** What about your own reading? I know you are a fairly prolific reader of current SF/fantasy...

**Card:** Yes. I'm going to be publishing a short fiction review magazine called *Short Form*, and for the past two years I have read every single short story that I could find—all the magazine stories and most of the anthologies in the field. I read two or three books a week, at least. I do a lot of fiction, of course, but I also read biography, history, contemporary political science, and analyses of contemporary society. I am fascinated by the media and just got through *The Media Elite*, which I thought was a very valuable analysis of how much the media functions as a social group. What I look for, really, is the kind of thing I develop in my fiction, which is the interplay of people with each other—the way that other people's expectations transform individuals and create them. That's what my main concern is, which leads some critics to misunderstand. They want writers who are concerned with language and literary things, and I essentially let the voice of my story take care of itself. I concentrate on the people and their relationships, and that is what anyone who likes my work had better be interested in.

**Xignals:** You say you don't have much background in science and technology, which for many SF writers is the cornerstone of their work. Do you research things you need, or just cobble things together?

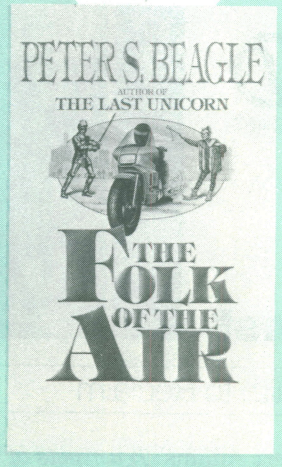
**Card:** I fake it. If it's something that is really beyond me, I "black-box" it. I just say, "It works, and leave me alone." There are some ideas on the fringes of science; advanced physics blends into metaphysics almost with-

## NEW IN HARDCOVER

**The Folk of the Air** *by Peter S. Beagle* (Del Rey)

Homecoming after a long absence always brings unexpected changes, but Farrell was still surprised to find that his old friend Ben had moved in with Sia, an unattractive older woman. And it seemed out of character that Ben and Julie, Farrell's girlfriend, had joined the League for Archaic Pleasure—a slightly too-serious group dedicated to reviving the customs and manners of the Middle Ages. Still, it all seemed harmless enough. Then Farrell noticed that Sia's ancient house was never quite the same—as if the rooms were somehow appearing and disappearing between visits. And the League's members weren't just playacting their medieval roles; Ben was acting as if he were actively possessed by the ninth-century Viking whose part he took. Then a young girl, Aiffe, demonstrated her "witchcraft" by calling up the spirit of Nicholas Bonner, who'd been sent to limbo some five centuries in the past! The combined powers of Aiffe and Bonner make a mockery of the League's annual recreation of medieval combat. But their real purpose is far more deadly: to attack Sia, with whom Bonner has a strange connection from the far past. Gradually, Farrell realizes that only Sia stands between Bonner and the revival of an evil long since banished from the Earth. But Sia has retreated to one of her disappearing rooms, hiding behind an illusion...A welcome return to fantasy for Beagle, whose last appearance was the 1968 classic *The Last Unicorn*. Look for it on the Waldenbooks hardcover racks.**x**

**10% OFF Through March 31**




~~$16.95~~ **$15.25**

out a break, and in that area I speculate freely. I've kept up and feel reasonably competent in the "soft" sciences—sociology, anthropology. In the biological sciences, the general run of the theory of evolution fascinates me, and I work in that and with genetics. But the hard, hard sciences—I couldn't design a planet to save my life. I have no idea of what gravity is or how it works. The things that have dominated most of science fictional science I know nothing about, and so I just feel free to steal from other writers, if I can.

**Xignals:** You've mentioned that you plan to issue a collection of the "Mormon Sea" stories; what else can we look for from you in the near future?

**Card:** "Hatrack River," which appeared in the August *Asimov's* and another story called "Runaway" which will be appearing soon, are from different volumes of a six-volume series called *The Tales of Alvin Maker*, which will start appearing this summer from Tor. I'm really excited about it. It's a whole new kind of fantasy—told in an American idiom and set in the frontier period: 1800–1840 in Ohio and Indiana, mostly. As far as I know, nobody's done a regular magical fantasy set in that period and dealing with those themes. It's an alternate America in which there was no American Revolution as we know it; George Washington was beheaded by the king, etc. The first volume primarily deals with introducing the magic and the religious aspects of life there. Each volume deals with a different theme—the Indian wars, slavery, and so forth. But all of them follow the career of young Alvin, who is growing up to be a Maker, which is the supreme magical power that's possible in that world. I think it's the best thing I've ever done, and I've never had more fun writing, or been more excited about something when I was through with it.**x**

**ENDER'S RETURN** *cont. from page 1*
only do the Piggies appear to be a species without females, but every niche in the ecology is occupied by a species apparently unrelated to any other on the planet. But when the native creatures brutally murder a scientist who has befriended them, a crisis is in the making. Ender, determined never again to allow the destruction of an entire species, realizes that he must uncover the secret of the aliens' biology to have a chance of saving them from a xenocidal reprisal. A striking performance by Card—for once, a sequel that surpasses the original. A leading contender for the 1986 Nebula, now in paperback. **$3.95x**

## A Forgotten War

*In the Field of Fire*—Jeanne Van Buren Dann and Jack Dann, Editors (Tor Books)

Science fiction writers have been telling war stories ever since the days of Kipling and Wells, and they've often given us a preview of the horrors the next generation was going to face on the battlefield. A good number of major SF writers are veterans, and the sales of SF/fantasy are always brisk at stores in the vicinity of military bases. There's even a thriving subgenre of high-tech combat SF.

It seems logical, then, that Vietnam would come under the scrutiny of SF writers. SF is one of our strongest tools for examining things we don't understand, and 'Nam remains the greatest anomaly of our recent history: a war the veterans themselves will rarely talk about, even to close friends or family. The suicide rate among Vietnam combat veterans is 65% higher than that of the population at large.

*In the Field of Fire*, edited by Jeanne Van Buren Dann and Jack Dann, brings together what may be the most powerful collection of nightmares since the war itself ended. This is not a book for readers looking for Rambo-style escapism and clear-cut

moral positions. 'Nam can't be brushed away that easily. Any war is a test of personal and societal values, and America was nearly ripped apart by the war. As the Danns' introduction points out, perhaps *only* SF and fantasy writers could find a way to deal with 'Nam.

Try Joe Haldeman's searing contribution, a poem that looks death straight in the eye. Or perhaps Craig Kee Strete's translation of the conflict into native American mythological terms is more likely to lift the top of your head off. Or maybe you'd be happier with the versions of apocalypse offered up by Barry Malzberg, Harlan Ellison, or Lucius Shepard—or any of the other 17 authors. None of them pull any punches. Even Ben Bova, at the opposite end of the political spectrum from many of the others here, contributes one of his strongest stories to this collection.

*In the Field of Fire* may be the most powerful SF anthology since *Dangerous Visions*. Perhaps it hits too many still-exposed nerves to be a comfortable commercial success; short story anthologies have low sales expectations, anyway. Even so, this book deserves to be a success, if only to repay the editors' and publishers' courage in making it available. It should be required reading for anyone who wants to understand what Vietnam meant to those who fought it—and fought against it. **$8.95x**

## Contest Winners

### Son of Sure-Fire Titles

We asked for titles for as-yet unwritten SF/fantasy bestsellers, and (as usual) the suggestions came pouring in! At last, authors and publishers who just don't know what to call their books can benefit from the collective expertise of our *Xignals* fans. Now, who wants to write some of these "can't-miss" books?

* * * * * * * * * * *

**Mythspelled**—Scott Doty, Irving, TX
**Trumps of Dune**—Jonathan Kwoh, Murrysville, PA
**Conan the Barber**—Ron Nyren, Southington, CT
**The Hitchhiker's Guide to Middle-Earth**—Scott Garms, Battle Creek, MI
**Dragon Drumsticks and Wings—Gourmet Cookbook**—Marianne LaBatto, Brooklyn, NY
**Starship Bloopers**—Bill Harris, Texas City, TX
**Gesundheit 451**—Phil Gensz, Ellisville, MO
**Dune Buggies: The Insect Life of Arrakis**—Joel D. Kirkes, Las Cruces, NM
**The Starship Pilot's Deep Space Diet**—Don Alan, Fairpoint, OH
**Cerberus Goes Head to Head**—Curtis H. Robins, Manakin-Sabot, VA
**Great Grandchildren-Bishop-Trolls of Middle Earth**—John Pritchett, Pacific, MO
**6 Easy Steps to Universal Domination**—Aaron B. Barker, Cambry, IN
**Lucky Starr and the Pirates of Penzance**—Leslie Childers, Winfield, WV
**Wine of the Dinosaurs**—Michael B. Toman, Torrance, CA
**101 Uses for a Dead Ogre**—Krista Kracman, Brady, NE
**Goody Three-Shoes, the Nerd from Mars**—Greg Crider, Rome, GA
**The Momma Hunters**—Terry I. Gey, Westminster, CA
**Dragon Dance Lessons, Book II: Waltz of the Twins**—Michelle Carpick, Springfield, VA
**Itch World**—M. Heath Rasmussen, Plano, ID
**Split Ends of Infinity**—Ben Church, St. Louis, MO
**Dragonbusters**—"Zenna," Las Vegas, NV
**Garbage Pail Kids of Shannara**—Danny Read, Pompano Beach, FL
**The Return of the Reaganauts**—Jamie Pehling, Walnut Creek, CA
**Flutes of Doom**—Larry Schimel, Brookville, NY
**Giant Insane Penguin Vigilantes and the Subway to the Stars**—Fred Wright, New Castle, PA
**The Coming of the Great White Handkerchief**—Robert Baruch, Bayside, NY
**Godzilla Takes the Taste Test**—Connie Wang, Tavares, FL
**Illegal Aliens**—William L. Randolph, Columbia Station, OH
**Biogenetics and the Birth of the Blues**—F. Dorsett, Port Sulfur, LA
**I, Sasquatch**—Marcie Hickey, N. Stonington, CT
**A Stainless Steel Rat Eats D-Con**—Charles James, Lamar, MO
**Shysters of Sanctuary**—Scott Frank, Bethesda, MD
**Brunch of the Living Dead**—L. Stephen Ferguson, Beckley, WV
**Bane of the Snugglebums**—Chris Webb, Lexington, MA
**Nerdquest**—Jeremy Hobson, Neosho, MD

* * * * * * * * * * *

Our thanks to everyone who entered—it's a shame we didn't have space to run all the entries. See p. 16 for another chance to show your creativity—and maybe see your work in *Xignals*!

## Reader Quiz

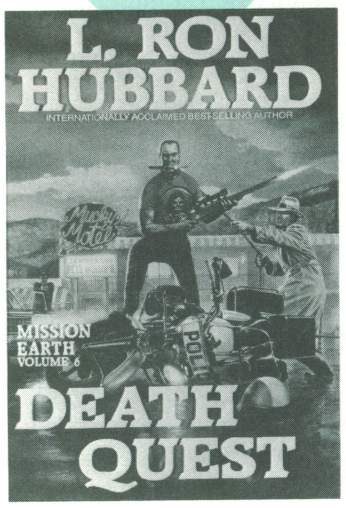
### SF Title Search

We haven't run any word-finder puzzles before, but S.M. Penick, manager of Waldenbooks #467 in Springfield, OH, sent along this one that they'd given to customers during our Club Membership Drive. We're delighted to reprint it for our readers' enjoyment—one more example of the creative minds at work behind the counter of your local Waldenbooks! Have fun...

[Answers on p. 11.]

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | A | R | A | N | N | A | H | S | F | O | D | R | O | W | S | S | T |
| N | Y | A | W | D | L | R | O | W | Y | A | D | N | I | R | T | Z | B |
| W | F | T | Y | C | C | O | C | O | O | N | F | Z | Z | A | C | L | E |
| A | O | O | H | W | R | D | C | C | O | N | A | N | R | S | U | S | D |
| D | R | G | O | A | T | I | T | A | N | R | V | W | E | E | A | O | N |
| F | E | R | B | F | D | A | Z | L | D | K | A | E | A | E | A | A | E |
| O | V | E | B | D | B | V | S | S | E | R | R | D | D | R | N | H | I |
| S | E | O | I | A | L | O | E | R | S | T | E | I | O | S | O | C | L |
| T | R | G | T | Y | F | N | T | N | E | P | S | F | D | L | R | F | A |
| O | W | R | N | R | A | R | F | N | T | N | G | R | Z | I | O | O | Y |
| B | A | E | I | C | A | D | O | N | I | V | O | I | A | P | C | E | H |
| O | R | D | L | T | A | I | H | I | T | O | R | M | Y | T | H | C | M |
| R | A | U | S | N | R | O | C | I | N | V | I | E | T | I | S | A | S |
| Y | V | Z | N | O | L | A | V | A | F | O | S | T | S | I | M | F | F |

35% OFF




~~$18.95~~ $12.32

## "Mission Earth"

*Death Quest*

By now, it's pretty clear that L. Ron Hubbard's 10-volume SF adventure, "Mission Earth" is going to stay on the bestseller lists right up to the final installment. The point has not always been obvious, but when the fourth and fifth volumes of a series sell better than the first, you can hardly claim it's a fluke. Nobody starts reading a series at the fourth volume; clearly, the figures show readers who started at the beginning can't resist finding out what happens next.

Let's be frank about it. This defies all conventional wisdom, which says that SF doesn't sell, satire doesn't sell, and that the combination of the two is absolute poison, commercially. It also deflates the cynics who claimed that sales of the early volumes were due to massive hype, deep discounts, and other finagle factors. Well, hype can propel the first volume of a series into big-bucks sales, but you aren't going to have much luck getting buyers for Book II (let alone Book V) unless Book I delivered the goods the fans wanted.

Granted, Hubbard's Golden Age SF and fantasy had made him a legend, and his retirement from the field had given him the added aura of mystery. But over 30 years had passed between his retirement and his return; the old-time fans may well have remembered his work fondly, but they were hardly enough, by themselves, to put him on the bestseller lists. The only way a book could sell in such quantities, especially in hardcover, was to hit a responsive nerve in today's audience.

One clue to Hubbard's new success comes from our *Xignals* reader polls, which suggest that today's SF readers have no special loyalty to the Golden Age. Hubbard's comeback novel *Battlefield Earth* placed second only to *Dune* in our all-time favorite novel poll. But other legendary figures, whose recent books have fallen short of the expectations their reputations have raised, got very few votes. Whatever it is that today's readers want, Hubbard evidently provides it in full measure.

The elements are not that hard to identify; in fact, they can be found in many other writers' work. You could probably find several hundred novels on the Waldenbooks rack that feature a good guys–bad guys plot, for example. It's one of the stock devices of popular fiction. Notice, though, how Hubbard's version is given subtle twists. Jettero Heller, his hero, is almost too good—his exploits are heightened just enough to take on an edge of parody. Soltan Gris, the villain, is as single-mindedly inept as the coyote in the "Roadrunner" cartoons. The other characters also take on an edge of comic exaggeration.

Look at *Death Quest*, the sixth volume of the "Mission Earth" series —due at your local Waldenbooks on February 10. Gris has now hired a hit man—Torpedo Fiaccola, a killer so loathsome that even the Mafia has blacklisted him. Gris wants Torpedo to eliminate the Countess Krak, whom he now sees as the main obstacle in his plan to finish off Heller. As readers who've been following the series know, Gris' plans are part of a larger plot to subvert the Voltarian conquest of Earth—a planet that, officially, doesn't even exist. Heller's mission, if successful, will make Earth a part of the Voltarian empire—and finish Gris' plot to exploit its resources for his own benefit.

As if all that weren't enough, Hubbard throws in a bubble gum-chewing teenager, a pig farm in Virginia, the Coast Guard, and plenty of characters left over from previous volumes. And the tongue-in-cheek satire is likely to have you chuckling all the way through. Most important, the complications and twists just keep piling up, and it's a rare fan who can resist a plot with so much momentum. In short, the series offers a sufficient variety of pleasures to appeal to new fans as well as to those raised on Golden Age classics.

There are four more volumes to come, and fans still worried about whether Hubbard completed the epic before his death should be assured that a pre-publication copy of the final volume is sitting on the shelves in the *Xignals* office. Sorry, no hints on the outcome—you'll have to read it yourself! Well, one hint—it's every bit as exciting as the previous nine volumes, and the satire is even more preposterous. So if you haven't begun the series, now would be a great time to start. You might catch up in time to read the last volume as it comes off the presses...**x**


## Receive *Xignals* at Home—Subscribe Now!

**YES!** I want to receive **Xignals** at the address below. I've enclosed $5.00 ($10.00 outside the U.S.) for a one-year subscription (six issues). A photocopy of this coupon is acceptable for ordering.

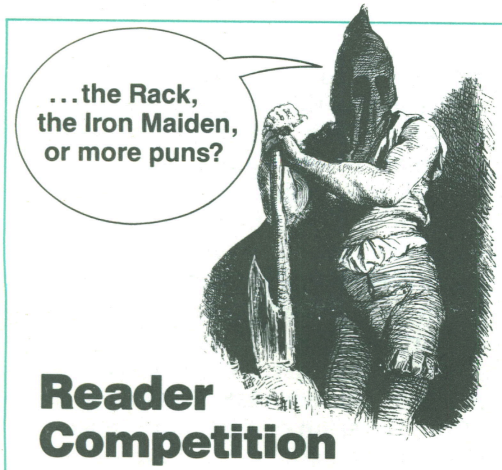
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ **XN001**

Payment must accompany your order. Only checks or money orders (made payable to Waldenbooks) accepted. Do not send cash.
Mail your order to:
**Waldenbooks**
***Xignals***
**P.O. Box 4225**
**Huntington Station, NY 11746**




## Reader Competition

### Gluttons for Pun-ishment

Our first *Xignals* pun competition set off a wave of groans nationwide. Did we learn anything from the experience? Nah—we're going to do it again!

The ground rules are the same for this second round as for the first:

1. Your entry should have some detectable SF/fantasy/fannish theme; mundane puns will be disqualified.

2. Brevity, we hear tell, is the soul of wit. In honor of this tradition, as well as of space limitations, we humbly request you to keep your entries short. If it needs five pages of build-up, we can't use it.

3. This is a family magazine; *keep it clean.* Violators of this provision will be shoved out of a nearby airlock when they least expect it.

4. Entries should be sent to:

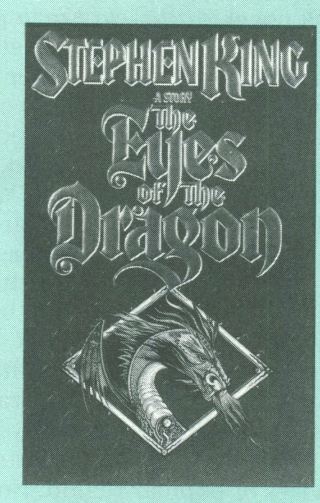
*Xignals* Pun Competition
% Waldenbooks
P.O. Box 10218
Stamford, CT 06904

All entries should be postmarked before April 15, 1987, and none can be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope with proper postage.

Okay, punsters—do your worst! x


# Stephen King

## The Eyes of the Dragon




**Viking—$18.95**

*Not eligible for club discount.*

***A tale of archetypal heroes and sweeping adventures, of dragons and princes and evil wizards—as told by the incomparable Stephen King!***

KING'S MASTERFUL NEW FANTASY began as a story the author told to his children; now, with all the wit and power that has placed him at the top of everyone's bestseller lists, he brings it to readers everywhere.

A dying king, an ambitious wizard, a pliable young prince, and a mouse that finds a grain of Dragon Sand: these are the raw materials. But in the hands of Stephen King, they have grown into a tale few readers will forget. *With illustrations by David Palladini.*



Waldenbooks
201 High Ridge Road
Stamford, CT 06904

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit No. 6
Hartford, CT